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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000489

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [ASEC](#) [GV](#)  
SUBJECT: YOUTH FIRED UP OVER POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

REF: A. CONAKRY 0487  
[1](#)B. CONAKRY 0476

Classified By: A/DCM SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY. If an August 19 Embassy reception is any indication, key youth leaders in Guinea are fired up about the announced delay in elections and the possibility of Dadis as a presidential candidate. Contacts were unanimously agreed that Dadis plans to run for office and that if he does so, he will "set the country on fire." Several guests said that a major youth movement is likely to take off "soon," possibly in the next few weeks. Over the last two years, Embassy has seen such movements fizzle at the last moment, which could very well be the case with this one. However, it is equally possible that with the convergence of growing frustration with the stalled transition and indications that the CNDD has no plans to leave peacefully, a "trigger" such as a formal candidacy announcement from Dadis may be all that is needed to set things in motion. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (SBU) During an August 19 reception for a public diplomacy visiting speaker program hosted by A/DCM, Conakry youth leaders were wound up about the postponing of elections and the possibility that CNDD President Moussa Dadis Camara may be planning to announce his candidacy (reftels). The event attracted approximately 30 of Guinea's most active youth leaders, all between the ages of 20 and 35, coming from political parties, civil society organizations, and academia. They are considered well-educated, intellectually sharp, and engaged. They are also well known to each other. One attendee commented that approximately 85% of the guests were part of a network established when they studied at university together.

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DADIS WILL BE A CANDIDATE  
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[1](#)3. (U) As the reception took place, Dadis was holding a press conference wherein he made several troubling announcements. Cell phones were ringing throughout the evening as contacts called guests to update them on Dadis' latest rants. According to local press, Dadis said "the people never said that I could not present myself as a candidate...neither did the journalists. I am a citizen. I have already said that I will not be a candidate in 2009. But in 2010, it is the people who know...that depends on God."

[1](#)4. (C) Youth reactions ranged from anger to frustration to vindication. Without exception, they were all convinced that Dadis is laying the groundwork for a presidential bid and that it is only a matter time before he makes his intentions known to the rest of the world. "I am telling you right now, he is going to run, and it is going to set this country on fire," one said. Other youths echoed the same sentiment.

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"SECOND REVOLUTION"  
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15. (C) Not only were guests certain about Dadis' intentions, they were equally certain that any such announcement would incite an immediate revolt among the youth. Several contacts made comments like "there will be some activity soon," "people are getting ready," or "this will be 2007 all over again" (referring to the mass labor movement of early 2007 that resulted in widespread violence). Still others used words like "second revolution" and "civil war." One person commented that September and October are likely to be highly volatile politically and socially.

16. (C) A/DCM pulled Mouctar Diallo, the young leader of the NFD political party, aside for a private conversation. A key youth leader during the 2007 strike, Diallo has been consistently and publicly critical of the CNDD, but he is also known for his objective, calm, balanced approach to socio-political issues. Diallo has been reluctant to risk violence, but also committed to the idea that other tactics may ultimately fail, forcing a violent response.

17. (C) According to Diallo, the threat of a youth uprising is of grave concern. He said the youths are talking extensively about the delayed election timeline and Dadis' potential candidacy, and they are increasingly frustrated with the transition process. "We could be looking at some kind of youth movement very soon, maybe within the next few weeks," Diallo said. When A/DCM questioned whether such a movement would take off during the holy month of Ramadan,

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which is scheduled to begin in the next few days, Diallo said that while Ramadan is normally a peaceful time, there are exceptions. He cited a story from the Koran that focuses on an uprising that took place during the holy month. Diallo said that if the right amount of frustration and desperation are in place, it is possible that youths would react during Ramadan and they would be even more "fervent" in their actions. (COMMENT. When consulted later, a religious contact was not sure which story Diallo was referring to, but said that it is not unheard of in Guinea to experience violence during Ramadan. Civil unrest took place during this period last year. END COMMENT).

18. (C) Since the assembled youths were clearly opposed to Dadis and the CNDD, Embassy officers asked questions about the recent emergence of pro-Dadis youth movements. Guests immediately dismissed these movements as insignificant, saying that such groups had existed under the Conte regime and were essentially small and easily manipulated. One youth commented that when things became unbearable, the pro-Conte groups were nothing compared to the masses of people that took to the streets in 2007. "We are not concerned about them. They have their views and we have ours, but we have the numbers," one person said.

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COMMENT  
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19. (C) Unlike many receptions where conversation is muted and guests mingle among old friends and make new contacts, this was a reception with an atmosphere of palpable fire and energy. Virtually no other subjects were discussed except that of the elections and Dadis. Equally telling was the fact that everyone was essentially saying the same thing. Even those contacts who are generally more cautious and advocate for restraint seemed to be moving in a different direction. The PD speaker is in country to discuss youth empowerment and participation in the democratic process, but most of the attendees had not yet attended any of his sessions. They seemed energized not by the speaker, but by events taking place in Guinea.

¶10. (C) At the same time, Embassy has repeatedly seen emerging youth movements fracture just as it seems they are on the verge of something big. The movement in 2007 was an exception and it is possible that with the right combination of events and frustration, such a movement could materialize again. These youth leaders seem to think that they are approaching that moment and that Dadis' candidacy may be the catalyst. They may be right, but past experience suggests that nothing comes of it. Furthermore, it could be months before Dadis announces his candidacy. A sensitive source indicated that Dadds plans to run, but that his supporters are debating how it should be done. There are also discussions of putting in a puppet candidate rather than Dadis himself. END COMMENT.  
BROKENSIRE